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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 001191

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT PARA 1)

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/FO, NEA/IPA, NEA/ARP
NSC FOR NRAMCHAND, EABRAMS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/18/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [AE](#)
SUBJECT: UAE REACTION TO POTUS 7/16 REMARKS

Ref: ABU DHABI 1190

Classified by Ambassador Michele J. Sison,
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Reactions from UAE political contacts on President Bush's July 16 call for an international conference on the Middle East have been generally positive, although UAE media reaction has been skeptical. Ambassador spoke with UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed twice on 7/17 evening via telephone (AbZ is in Paris with UAE President Khalifa). AbZ asked whether the USG would be consulting with regional governments about plans for the international conference aimed at starting peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians. He also inquired whether the conference agenda was a "done deal." Ambassador replied that we would welcome UAE's views; the upcoming July 31 GCC + 2 meeting in Sharm el-Sheik would present an opportunity for discussion of the POTUS proposal. AbZ asked whether the conference timing or participants had yet been decided. Ambassador responded that these details had not yet been worked out.

¶2. (C) AbZ agreed to issue a public UAE statement on the POTUS proposal on 7/18. He also agreed that UAE would continue to work with other Arab governments to maintain support for President Abbas and PM Fayyad, although he then sighed and said, "what more can we do? We are already giving 110%."

¶3. (C) Ambassador also spoke with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed's International Affairs Director, Yousef al Otaiba, on 7/17. Although he made no direct comment on the POTUS address, he noted the need for the international community to focus on the critical Palestinian issue. He also informed Ambassador that the Quartet's Tony Blair would meet with MbZ on 7/25.

¶4. (C) National Security Advisor Sheikh Hazza bin Zayed's State Security Director of Research and Analysis, BG Hamad al Shamsi, told Ambassador 7/18 that POTUS' remarks had given a boost to Abu Mazen, especially in the West Bank. POTUS' statements on the importance of the Palestinian issue and Abu Mazen's vision had been well-timed and much-needed. BG Hamad added that he welcomed the news of the intended additional \$80 million in US financial support, noting that the UAE had also assisted President Abbas with \$80 million in May (Hazza and BG Hamad are the main points of contact for USSC Gen Dayton).

¶5. (U) Reaction in the UAE press was relatively sparse, but skeptical of the proposed conference's chances for success (sample excerpts: "American hypocrisy," "zero chance for a peace deal", "Bush is still dedicating himself and his policies to the service of the Zionist occupation in Palestine") -- reftel.

